

1 AN ACT regarding deaf and hard of hearing children.

2 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
3 represented in the General Assembly:

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Bill of Rights for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing
6 Act.

7 Section 5. Findings. In order to ensure that children
8 who are deaf or hard of hearing have the same rights and
9 potential to become independent and self-actualizing as
10 children who are not deaf or hard of hearing, the Bill of
11 Rights for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing is
12 established.

13 Section 10. Definition. "Communication mode and
14 language" means the individual child's communication mode or
15 language, whether oral, manual or a combination of oral and
16 manual modes including but not limited to:

- 17 (1) American Sign Language.
18 (2) English-based manual or sign systems.
19 (3) Oral, Aural or Speech-based training.

20 Section 15. Education. It is essential for the
21 well-being and growth of deaf and hard of hearing children
22 that educational programs recognize the unique nature of
23 deafness and ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing
24 children have appropriate, ongoing, and fully accessible
25 educational opportunities. It is essential that deaf and
26 hard of hearing children, like all children, have an
27 education in which their unique communication mode is
28 respected and utilized to develop literacy and writing skills
29 to an appropriate level of proficiency.

1 Section 20. Essentials for deaf and hard of hearing
2 children. The General Assembly recognizes that it is
3 essential for the well-being and educational and emotional
4 growth of children who are deaf and hard of hearing to have:

5 (1) Early identification services which identify
6 children with hearing losses as early in life as possible and
7 which result in prompt referrals to informational resources
8 linking children and parents to appropriate services.

9 (2) Early intervention services and parent education
10 provided by professionals who are trained and certified in
11 the field and who are proficient in the primary language or
12 communication mode used by the children.

13 (3) Educational placement from early childhood through
14 high school within programs which recognize the unique nature
15 of deafness and which are appropriate to the children's needs
16 including social, emotional, cultural, age, hearing loss,
17 academic level, modes of communication, style of learning,
18 motivational level, and family support.

19 (4) Educational programs in which teachers,
20 interpreters, early intervention specialists, diagnosticians,
21 supervisors, and others involved in the educational process
22 understand the unique nature of deafness, are trained and
23 certified in the field, and are proficient in the primary
24 language or communication mode used by the children. Program
25 administrators must have knowledge of the educational issues
26 and related services pertaining to educational programs for
27 children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

28 (5) Educational programs which provide screening and
29 assessment tools and procedures used in the children's
30 language or communication mode by qualified, certified
31 evaluators.

32 (6) Educational programs in which the children's
33 language or communication modes are respected, used, and
34 developed to an appropriate level of proficiency to ensure

1 comprehension and growth.

2 (7) Educational programs which provide ongoing
3 opportunities for the children to have direct interaction and
4 communication with other deaf or hard of hearing children.

5 (8) Educational programs which facilitate parental
6 advocacy and informed participation in the decision making
7 process relating to and affecting their child's education by
8 providing the parent or legal guardian with appropriate
9 information concerning all available programs, options, and
10 services.

11 (9) Full and equal access to all programs within the
12 children's educational setting.

13 (10) The opportunity to benefit from deaf or hard of
14 hearing role models from within the deaf community and to be
15 exposed to their contributions to society.

16 (11) External support and related services appropriate
17 to the children's needs provided by professionals who are
18 qualified, appropriately trained, or certified and able to
19 communicate proficiently in the language or communication
20 mode utilized by the children either directly or through the
21 use of an interpreter.